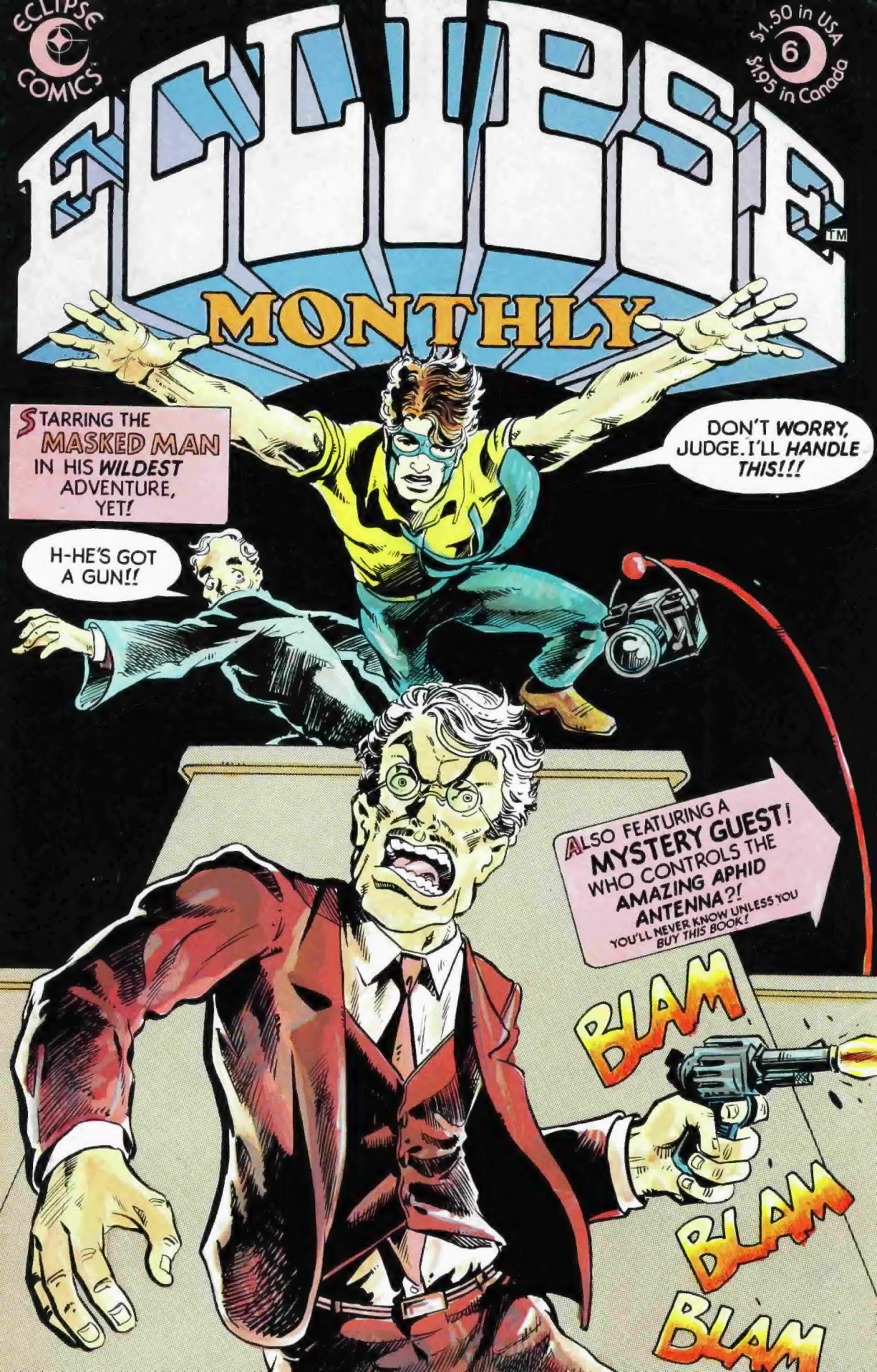
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H-HE'S GOT A GUN!!
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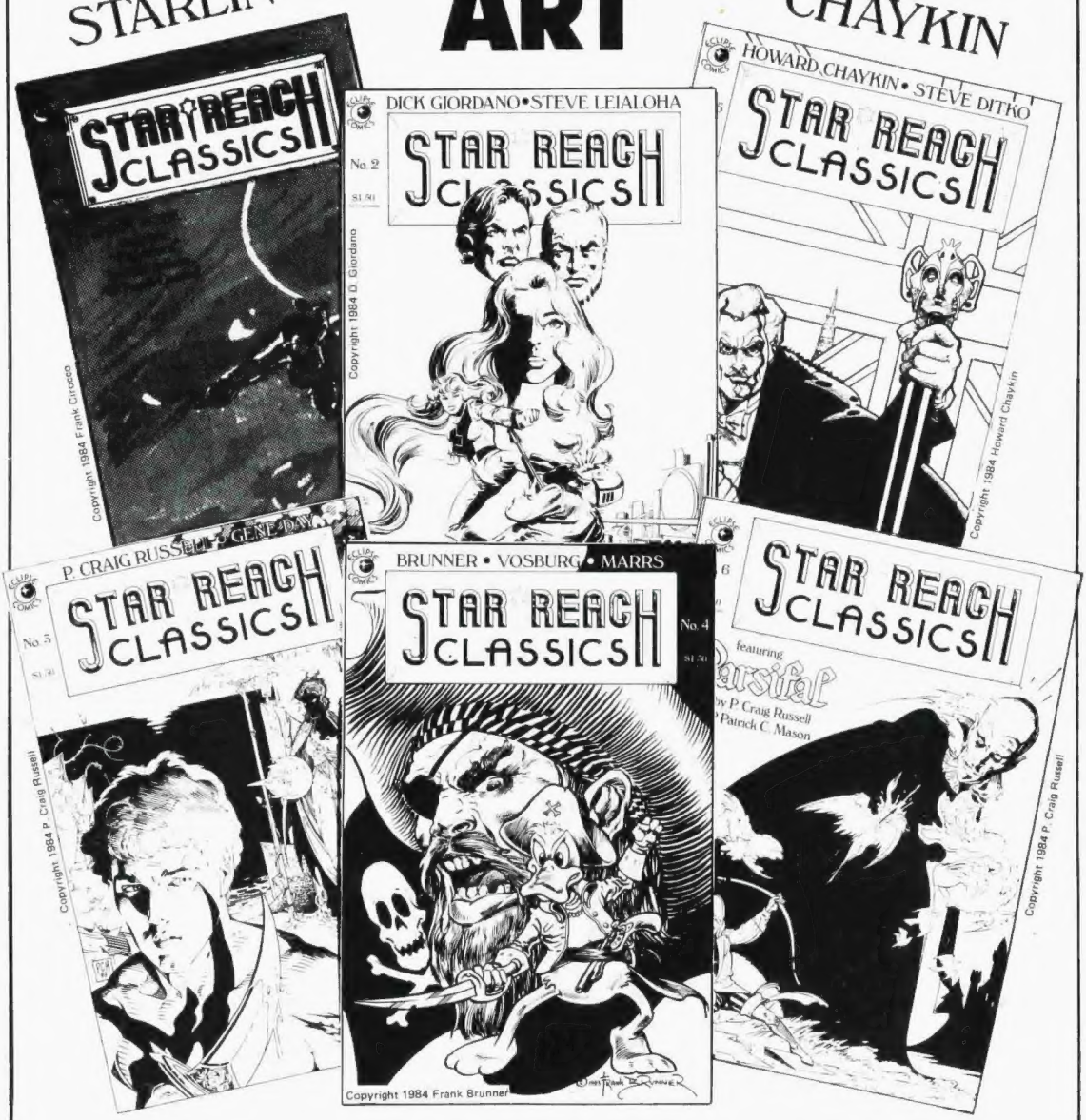

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CARLOS McLLYR
El CALIFORNIO
WRITTEN by CHRISTY MARX
ILLUSTRATED by PETER LEDGER

OLD GODS NEW WORLD

LOS ANGELES 1840

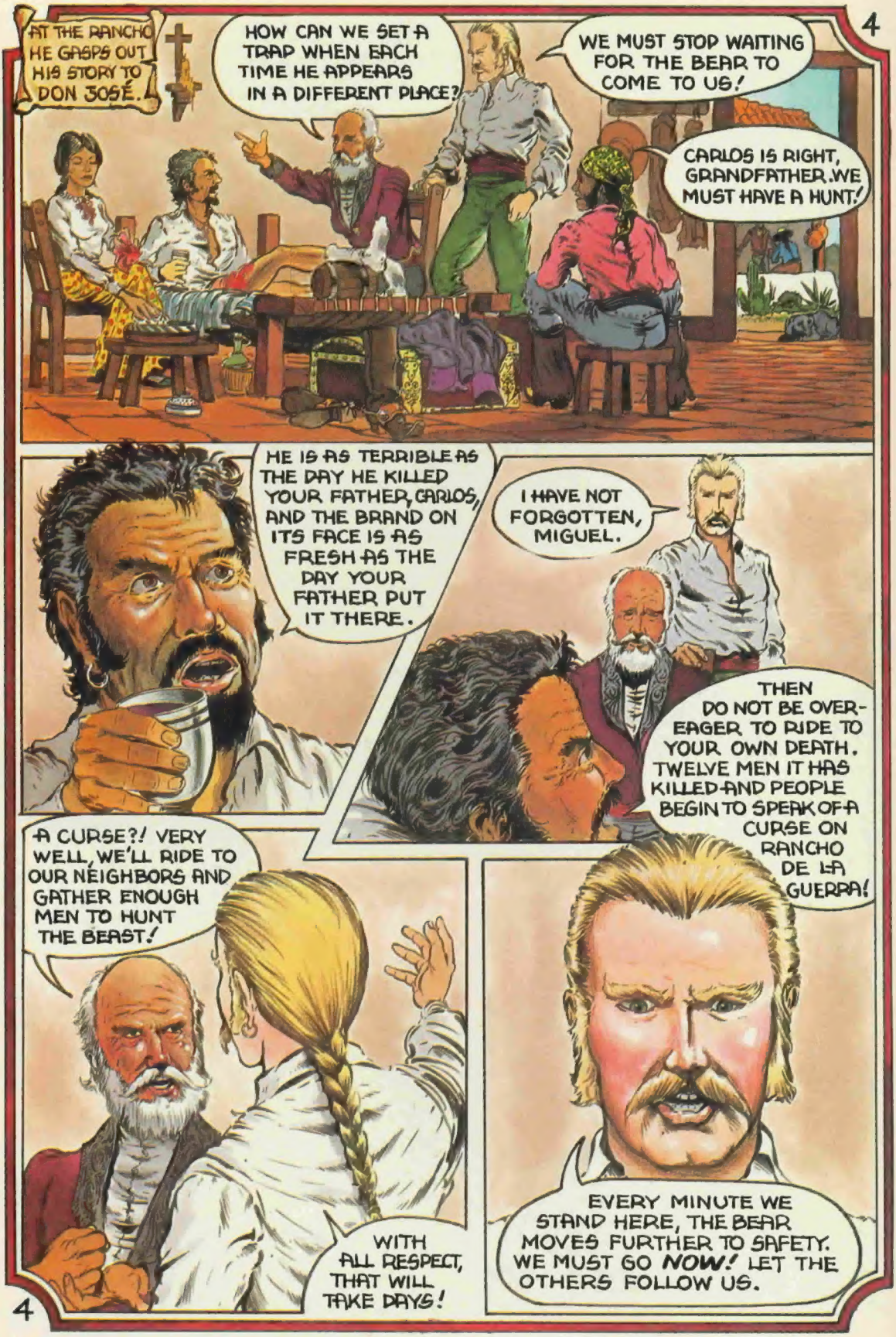
THE GRIZZLY COMES DOWN FROM THE SAN GABRIEL MOUNTAINS AT DAWN.

HE IS DRAWN BY AN OLD, BUT UNDYING HATRED. BEFORE HIM STRETCH THE CATTLE-RICH LANDS OF RANCHO DE LA GUERRA. THE ONE HE SEEKS IS NOT HERE, BUT THE SMELL OF MEN INFLAMES HIM. THEY ARE ALL HIS ENEMY.

AND IT IS TIME TO KILL AGAIN!

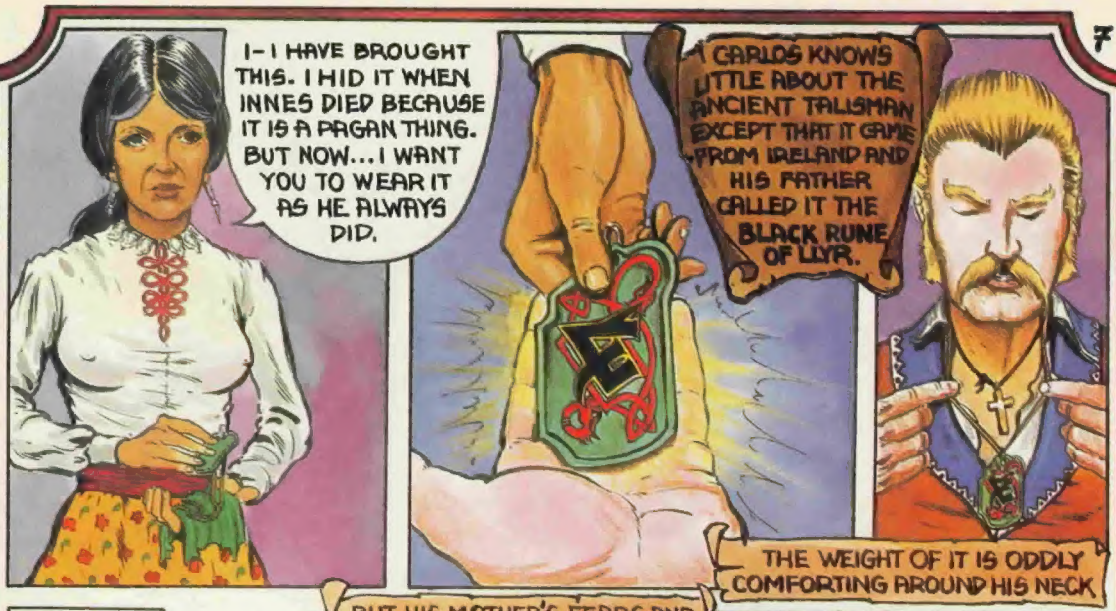
P-P-P-PACO! BEHIND YOU!

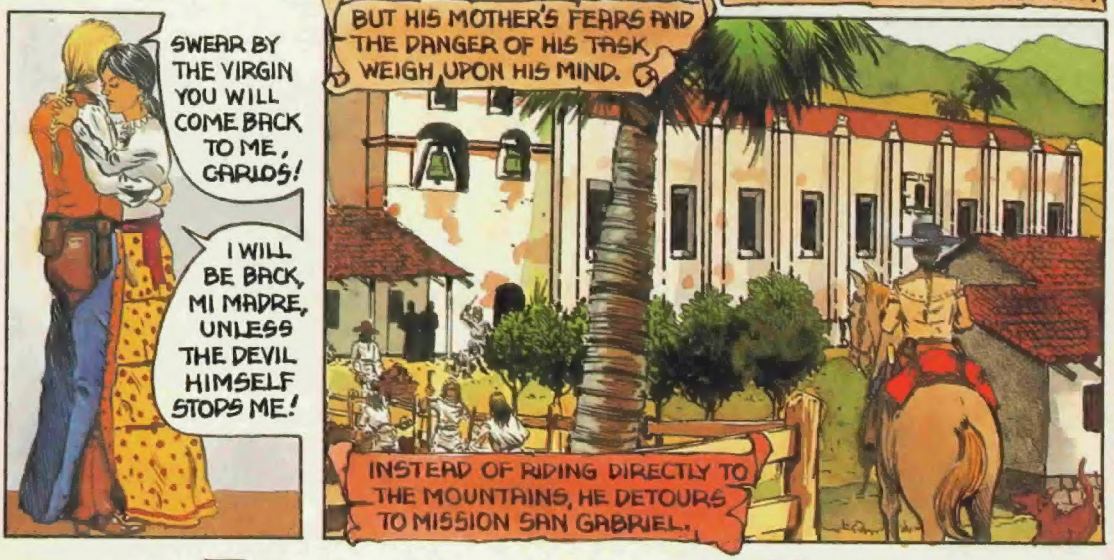
THE INDIANS ARE DEAD WITHIN SECONDS.
THE CABALLERO FIGHTS HIS HORSES MADNESS.
JESÚS SAVE ME! GAHHH!
THE MARK ON ITS FACE! IT IS THE DEVIL-BEAR!
I MUST WARN DON JOSÉ! SI, AND CARLOS, TOO!

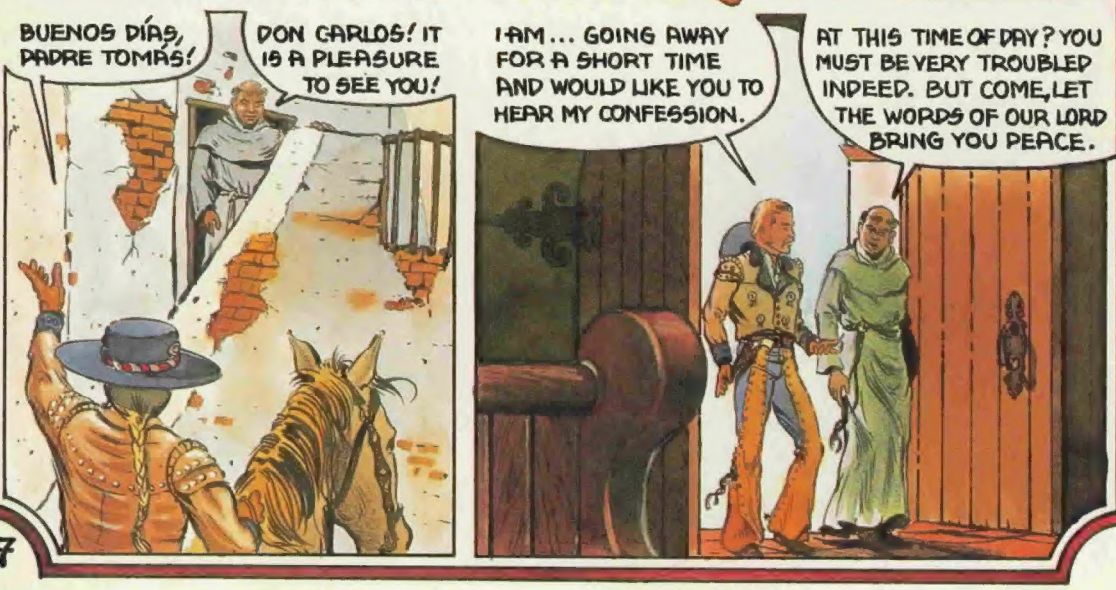

AT THE RANCHO HE GASPS OUT HIS STORY TO DON JOSÉ.
HOW CAN WE SET A TRAP WHEN EACH TIME HE APPEARS IN A DIFFERENT PLACE?
WE MUST STOP WAITING FOR THE BEAR TO COME TO US!
CARLOS IS RIGHT, GRANDFATHER. WE MUST HAVE A HUNT!
HE IS AS TERRIBLE AS THE DAY HE KILLED YOUR FATHER, CARLOS, AND THE BRAND ON ITS FACE IS AS FRESH AS THE DAY YOUR FATHER PUT IT THERE.
I HAVE NOT FORGOTTEN, MIGUEL.
THEN DO NOT BE OVER-EAGER TO RIDE TO YOUR OWN DEATH. TWELVE MEN IT HAS KILLED AND PEOPLE BEGIN TO SPEAK OF A CURSE ON RANCHO DE LA GUERRA!
A CURSE?! VERY WELL, WE'LL RIDE TO OUR NEIGHBORS AND GATHER ENOUGH MEN TO HUNT THE BEAST!
WITH ALL RESPECT, THAT WILL TAKE DAYS!
EVERY MINUTE WE STAND HERE, THE BEAR MOVES FURTHER TO SAFETY. WE MUST GO NOW! LET THE OTHERS FOLLOW US.

YOU MUST NOT LET YOUR NEED FOR VENGEANCE OVERCOME YOUR JUDGMENT. BE PATIENT!
I HAVE WAITED TWO YEARS! THAT IS PATIENCE ENOUGH!
CARLOS?!
AS HE PACKS, HE WAITS FOR THE KNOCK ON HIS DOOR THAT HE KNOWS MUST COME.
IT DOES...
SI! ENTER!

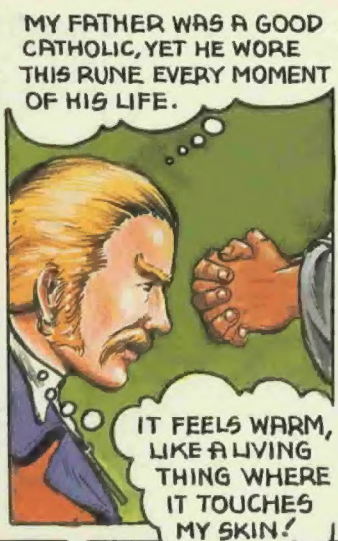
YOU WILL IGNORE YOUR GRANDFATHER'S ADVICE AND GO, OF COURSE.
SI, MOTHER.
AND YOU WILL GO ALONE LIKE A STUBBORN MULE, I SUPPOSE.
SI.
AND NOW YOU WILL TELL ME "YOU ARE JUST LIKE YOUR FATHER!"
WHY MUST YOU GO ALONE?
BECAUSE I MUST! I FEEL THE BEAR LUSTING FOR MY BLOOD AS SURELY AS I LUST FOR HIS.
IF I GO ALONE, I WILL FIND HIM. IF I GO WITH OTHERS, HE WILL HIDE AND WAIT.
IT IS TIME FOR ONE OF US TO DIE!
YOU ARE JUST LIKE YOUR...OH! POR LOS SANTOS!
...BY THE SAINTS!


I-I HAVE BROUGHT THIS. I HID IT WHEN INNES DIED BECAUSE IT IS A PAGAN THING. BUT NOW... I WANT YOU TO WEAR IT AS HE ALWAYS DID.
CARLOS KNOWS LITTLE ABOUT THE ANCIENT TALISMAN EXCEPT THAT IT CAME FROM IRELAND AND HIS FATHER CALLED IT THE BLACK RUNE OF LLYR.
THE WEIGHT OF IT IS ODDLY COMFORTING AROUND HIS NECK


SWEAR BY THE VIRGIN YOU WILL COME BACK TO ME, CARLOS!
I WILL BE BACK, MI MADRE, UNLESS THE DEVIL HIMSELF STOPS ME!
BUT HIS MOTHER'S FEARS AND THE DANGER OF HIS TASK WEIGH UPON HIS MIND.
INSTEAD OF RIDING DIRECTLY TO THE MOUNTAINS, HE DETOURS TO MISSION SAN GABRIEL.

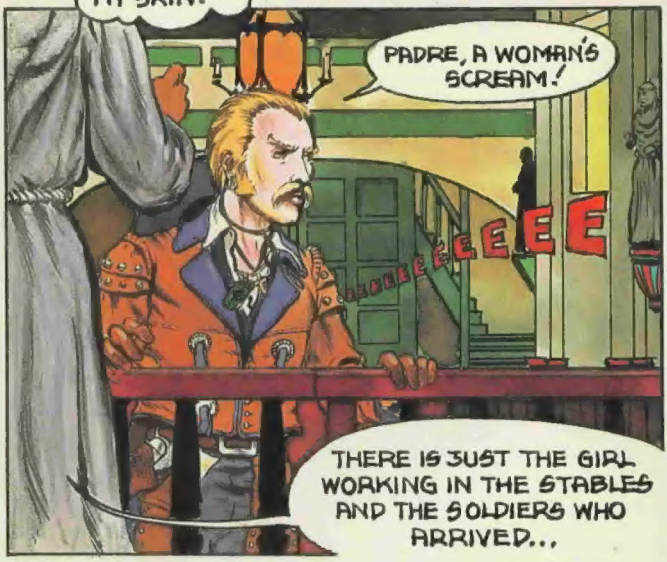

BUENOS DÍAS, PADRE TOMÁS!
DON CARLOS! IT IS A PLEASURE TO SEE YOU!
I AM... GOING AWAY FOR A SHORT TIME AND WOULD LIKE YOU TO HEAR MY CONFESSION.
AT THIS TIME OF DAY? YOU MUST BE VERY TROUBLED INDEED. BUT COME, LET THE WORDS OF OUR LORD BRING YOU PEACE.

THE PRIEST DRONES THE LATIN WORDS SOOTHINGLY, BUT CARLOS FINDS HIS MIND WANDERING.


MY FATHER WAS A GOOD CATHOLIC, YET HE WORE THIS RUNE EVERY MOMENT OF HIS LIFE.
IT FEELS WARM, LIKE A LIVING THING WHERE IT TOUCHES MY SKIN!

IS IT POSSIBLE THAT IT COULD BE BOTH GOOD AND EVIL AT ONCE?

CARLOS, DID YOU HEAR ME?
OH, SI! AMEN. GRACIAS...
BUT...YOU HAVE NOT CONFESSED YET!


PADRE, A WOMAN'S SCREAM!
EEEEEEEEEE
THERE IS JUST THE GIRL WORKING IN THE STABLES AND THE SOLDIERS WHO ARRIVED...

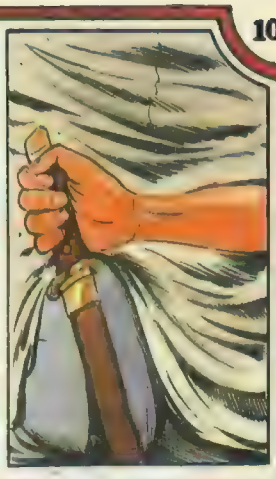
NO, DON CARLOS, THERE ARE MANY OF THEM!
THEY ARE ONLY MEXICANS. I AM A CABALLERO!

EEEEEEEEEEE

EEEEEEEEEEE

WHO DO YOU THINK WILL COME? THE PADRE? HA HA!
I'LL KILL YOU, FILTHY STINKING PIG! I'LL...
KLIK - KA - KLIK
DO NOT MOVE, DOGS!
STAND AWAY FROM THE SEÑORITA.
THERE IS NO SEÑORITA HERE. UNLESS YOU MEAN THIS HALF - BREED BITCH IN HEAT!
I GIVE YOU A SECOND WARNING. THERE WILL NOT BE ANOTHER! STAND AWAY!
YOU RANCHEROS THINK YOU ARE SO MUCH BETTER THAN US! WE WILL SEE!
LOOK OUT!
ANOTHER SOLDIER LEAPS FROM A HIDING PLACE IN THE LOFT!

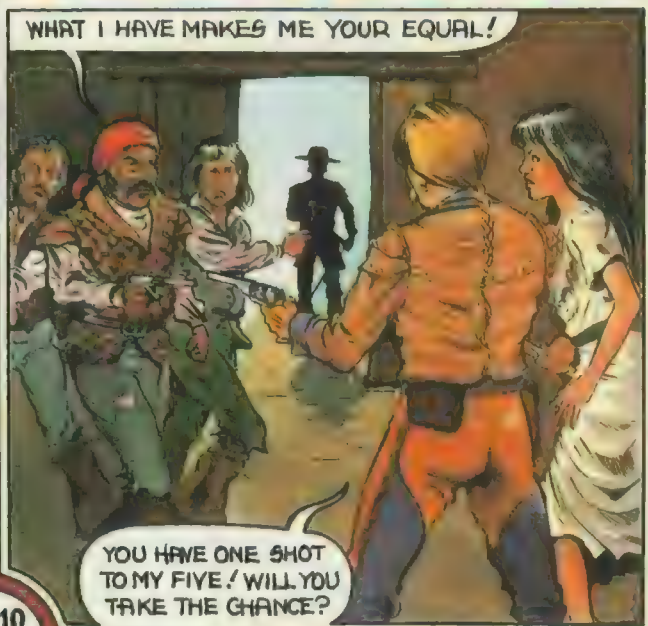
THE GIRL HESITATES. SHE COULD ESCAPE.



THUNK!
I SAID YOU WOULD DIE, PIG!

BLESSED MARÍA! HE THREW THEM OFF WITH EASE!

I AM ARMED AGAIN, COWARDS! RUN WHILE YOU CAN!


WHAT I HAVE MAKES ME YOUR EQUAL!
YOU HAVE ONE SHOT TO MY FIVE! WILL YOU TAKE THE CHANCE?

AH, SEÑOR, ONE SHOT IS ALL IT TAKES!
CONTINUED

Nightingale™
by MARK EVANIER and MIKE SEKOWSKY
Inked by AL GORDON with STEVE LEIALOHA and MARK EVANIER
LETTERING: CARRIE McCARTHY
COLORING: DENIS McFARLING

THE SCENE: AN ALTOGETHER CHI-CHI GATHERING AT THE HOME OF K. NEIMAN, PRESIDENT OF TECHNOR, INCORPORATED (THIS WEEK). GUEST OF HONOR: GENERAL PAOLO CARILLO, PRESIDENT OF THE COUNTRY OF SANTA AVARICIA (THIS WEEK)...
EVERYONE WHO'S ANYONE IS PRESENT... INCLUDING MR. NEIMAN'S OUTSPOKEN DAUGHTER...
...SKYING TO THE COAST...
LET'S TAKE A MEETING.
MAXIM'S ISN'T WHAT IT WAS.
PERRIER, TWIST OF LIME.
SERENA GREW UP IN SUCH PARTIES.
TODAY, HOWEVER, SHE FEELS STRANGELY REMOTE...
...SO DELIGHTED TO MEET YOU, GENERAL. YOU HAVE DONE SO MUCH FOR YOUR PEOPLE...
SO MUCH!? WHAT HAS HE DONE BESIDES TAX AND KILL THEM?
SERENA...
I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU PEOPLE! DON'T YOU KNOW WHAT THIS MAN IS? HIS DICTATORSHIP IS CORRUPT! AND, JUST BECAUSE HE HAS SOME MINERALS YOU WANT...
MY DEAR, GENERAL CARILLO IS OUR GUEST.
YOUR GUEST, FATHER. I CAN'T STAND SEEING HIM WOLF DOWN CAVIAR WHILE HIS PEOPLE STARVE.
GENERAL, YOU WILL HAVE TO FORGIVE MY IMPETUOUS DAUGHTER... THE PROPAGANDA THAT TELEVISION PUTS IN THEIR MINDS...
BUT ABOUT THOSE MINERAL RIGHTS...
2

SERENA HEADS FOR THE CLUB--TO TAKE OUT ON A DUMMY, SOME OF WHAT SHE FEELS ABOUT HER FATHER'S LINE OF WORK...
CAN'T PEOPLE REALIZE THERE'S SOMETHING ELSE IN THIS WORLD BESIDES MONEY-?
OH, WHO AM I KIDDING? DADDY WILL CHANGE HIS SEX BEFORE HE CHANGES HIS WAYS. MAYBE I JUST OUGHTA GO VISIT LAURA AT HER NEW PLACE...
LAURA IS A FRIEND OF SERENA'S FROM COLLEGE, RECENTLY RELOCATED IN THE NOT-SO-NICE PART OF TOWN...
AMAZING. I'VE LIVED IN THIS CITY ALL MY LIFE AND I'VE NEVER BEEN DOWN HERE...
PEOPLE LIVE LIKE THIS?
¡LLAME A LA POLICIA!
A PURSE-SNATCHER.
WHERE ARE THE POLICE?
SERENA SETS OUT AFTER HIM...
...AND SHE FINDS HERSELF KEEPING STEP WITH OTHERS.
3

IN MOMENTS, A FIGURE OVERTAKES HER AND...
I GOT HIM!
IF YOU HURT THAT WOMAN, WE RIP YOUR NOSE OFF. RIGHT, BOBBY--?
EASY, FREDDY-- FROM THE LOOKS OF HIS NOSE, SOMEBODY BEAT YOU TO IT. WE WAIT FOR POLICE.
OH, I SAW A STORY ABOUT YOU GUYS ON 60 MINUTES. YOU'RE THE SENTRY SQUAD.
YOU'RE PRETTY FAST, LADY. YOU ALMOST GOT HIM BEFORE WE DID.
OH, OFFICER! THIS MAN...
...SNATCHED A PURSE, I KNOW. IF IT WERE UP TO ME, I'D RUN ALL THESE STREET PUNKS IN. DAMN KIDS DON'T KNOW WHO THE LAW IS.
BUT THEY CAUGHT--
MISS, DO YOURSELF A FAVOR AND STAY CLEAR FROM THIS PART OF TOWN? 'SPECIALLY DRESSED LIKE THAT.
I DON'T GET IT. YOU'D THINK THE POLICE WOULD BE GRATEFUL. THOSE BOYS CAUGHT A PURSE-SNATCHER...
BUT THAT'S WHAT THEY SAID ON TV: THE POLICE AREN'T THRILLED ABOUT THE SENTRY SQUAD. WEIRD.

BY THE TIME SHE REACHES LAURA'S, ALL SERENA CAN THINK ABOUT IS WIPING THE GRIME OF THE STREETS FROM HER BODY...
THANKS FOR LETTING ME USE THE TUB, LAURA. BUT I CAN'T FIGURE WHY YOU'RE LIVING LIKE THIS. AND YOU SAY THEY CALL THIS A "LUXURY" APARTMENT?
UH-HUH. THAT MEANS THE COCK-ROACHES TAKE WEDNESDAYS OFF. IT'S HARD TO EXPLAIN BUT...WELL, YOU REMEMBER. I WAS TAKING PRE-MED..
SO--?
SO YOU WANT TO BE A NURSE, YOU GO WHERE FOLKS NEED NURSES. I'M WORKING AT THE FREE CLINIC.
FREE CLINICS...VIGILANTE SQUADS...I'M SURE A LONG WAY FROM FOREST GROVE...
LATER...
MA'AM, I'M SORRY BUT THIS ISN'T UNIVERSAL STUDIOS. WE DON'T HAVE TOURS HERE. WE'RE A CLINIC AND WE'RE UNDERSTAFFED.
BAD ONE, DOC! KNIFE WOUND.
THEY LOOK LIKE THEY'VE BEEN WAITING FOR DAYS...
MAYBE I CAN GET THEM SOME FUNDS...
FUNDS WOULD HELP. BUT WHAT THE INNER CITY FREE CLINIC NEEDS AT THE MOMENT IS BODIES: LIVE, HEALTHY ONES TO HELP THE SICK, INJURED ONES. BUT NO ONE SEEMS TO HAVE THE TIME.

BACK IN HER MANSION, SERENA DOES SOMETHING UNPRECEDENTED. SHE TURNS THE STEREO FROM THE ALL-EASY LISTENING STATION TO ALL-NEWS.
--SIXTH VICTIM OF THE INNER CITY STRANGLER WAS FOUND ALIVE. HER IDENTITY HAS NOT BEEN REVEALED. TURNING TO OTHER NEWS, HEALTH INSTRUCTOR JANE FONDA SAID TODAY--
SIX WOMEN? STRANGLED? I DIDN'T HEAR--
THAT'S IN THE AREA WHERE LAURA LIVES...
TRUE: AND WHAT SERENA DOESN'T KNOW YET S THAT LAURA WAS NUMBER SIX...
...AND THE STRANGLER'S BUSY ON NUMBER SEVEN.
EQUALLY BUSY ARE THE SENTRIES...
OVER HERE! THIS MAN ROBBED THE ALL-NIGHT MARKET!
HE STOLE THREE HUNDRED DOLLARS AND TWO GRAPE SLURPEES!
6

THE NEXT MORNING...
I CAME AS SOON AS I HEARD, LAURA.
HOW'D YOU GET YOUR LIMO DRIVER TO COME INTO THIS NEIGHBORHOOD?
THAT'S NOT NICE.
WELL, I DON'T FEEL NICE. DON'T SOIL YOUR GUCCIS FOR ME, SERENA.
SORRY. VISITING HOURS ARE UP.
...AND NOT A MOMENT TOO SOON--! LAURA'S HURT AND MAD...AND SHE'S TAKING IT OUT ON ME.
I DON'T BLAME HER.
I'M SGT. NYE, POLICE DEPARTMENT. YOU A FRIEND OF HERS?
RIGHT NOW, I DON'T FEEL LIKE MUCH OF A FRIEND OF ANYBODY'S.
SERENA PACES...PACES BACK TO THE BLOCK...
...AND SHE FINDS HERSELF STRANGELY DRAWN TO A POOL HALL THAT, THE CORNER GROCER TELLS HER, IS THE HANGOUT OF THE SENTRY SQUAD...
WE GET A LOT OF YOUR TYPE DOWN HERE, LADY. SEVEN BALL IN THE SIDE.
YOU'RE REALLY CONCERNED ABOUT US POOR, UNFORTUNATES ...SOMETIMES, YOU EVEN SEND US SOME BUCKS...
...ANYTHING, SO LONG AS IT DOESN'T INTERFERE WITH YOUR AEROBICS CLASS ON TUESDAYS.
I WANT TO HELP.
EVERYBODY WANTS TO HELP. NOBODY DOES NOTHING.
YOU KNOW WHAT HELPS? MY BROTHERS AND I--WE GO OUT, WE GIVE OUR TIME, WE GIVE OUR MUSCLES. THAT IS ALL THEY UNDERSTAND.

VIOLENCE ONLY UNDERSTANDS ACTION.
CHILL OUT, EMMANUEL. DON'T YOU LISTEN TO HIM, RICH LADY...
THE SENTRIES-- WE ARE HERE TO SHOW PEOPLE THAT REAL FOLKS WON'T LET THEIR NEIGHBORS BE SHOVED AROUND. FORGET THE POLICE. THE POLICE, THEY DO NOTHING.
WE DO SOMETHING. WE CARE. HOW ABOUT YOU, RICH LADY...
DO YOU CARE--?
SOME QUESTIONS, YOU JUST CAN'T ANSWER-- NOT VERBALLY, AT LEAST. SERENA LEAVES THE POOL HALL, DETERMINED...
I'VE GOT TO JOIN THOSE BOYS...THE SENTRIES. BUT I CAN'T DO IT AS THE DAUGHTER OF THE PRESIDENT OF TECHNOR...
50% OFF
SHE RENTS AN APARTMENT IN LAURA'S BUILDING AND BUYS SOME CLOTH...
NOT BAD. I NEVER SEWED ANYTHING FANCIER THAN A BUTTON BEFORE BUT THIS IS NOT BAD..
ALL HER LIFE, FOLKS HAVE DONE THINGS FOR HER. BUT NOW SHE HAS FOUND SOMETHING TO FILL THAT VOID THAT HAS SO NAGGED AT HER...
SERENA NEIMAN HAS DECIDED TO DO SOMETHING FOR SOMEBODY ELSE.
THE HEADDRESS WILL KEEP MY IDENTITY SECRET...
I DON'T KNOW WHAT GOOD I CAN DO BUT I'VE GOT TO DO SOMETHING. BUT WHERE DO I START?
TO BE CONTINUED

Cap'n Quick & a Foozle

coming your way soon

(* in their own 32 page book)

SO TELL US WHAT HAPPENED NEXT, MISS ELWOOD.
WELL I :CHOKE:...I CAME INTO THE ROOM AND SAW MR. KIRKLIN ON THE FLOOR...WITH A :SOB: BULLET IN HIS BACK.
NAME'S BARNEY McALLISTER. I'M A REPORTER. I COVER REMARKABLE PHENOMENA.
WAS THAT ALL YOU SAW?
NO...A MAN WAS STANDING OVER HIM...WITH A GUN IN HIS HAND.
IS THAT MAN IN THIS COURT-ROOM?
YES.
WILL YOU PLEASE POINT HIM OUT.
MY FRIEND'S NAME IS DICK CARSTAIRS. HE'S A DETECTIVE. HE'S ALSO THE MASKED MAN. HE FIGHTS CRIME.
THERE HE IS!
HE'S ALSO IN TROUBLE.
PLEASE LET IT BE RECORDED THAT MISS ELWOOD HAS ACCUSED DICK CARSTAIRS OF MURDERING J.R. KIRKLIN, CONGRESSMAN OF THE FORTY-SECOND DISTRICT.
IT LOOKS BAD, DICK.
I KNOW, BARN.
WHY DID YOU HAVE TO MAKE IT WORSE BY DECIDING TO DEFEND YOURSELF?
YOU KNOW HIM. HE'S GOT TO BE A HERO IN EVERYTHING.
YES. AND I KNOW YOU TOO, DREKSTON. YOU'VE BEEN TRYING TO PUT THE MASKED MAN OUT OF BUSINESS FOR QUITE SOME TIME. I BET YOU PUT THE IDEA INTO HIS HEAD.
ALRIGHT, MISS ELWOOD. LET'S GO BACK TO THE BEGINNING. YOU SAY MR. J.R. KIRKLIN WAS HAVING A PARTY THAT NIGHT.
YES.
THEN SOME MEN IN SKI MASKS CAME AND BEGAN TO ROB MR. KIRK-LIN AND HIS GUESTS.
YES.
THEN SOMEONE CAME BURSTING THROUGH THE WINDOW.
WHO?
YES.
1.

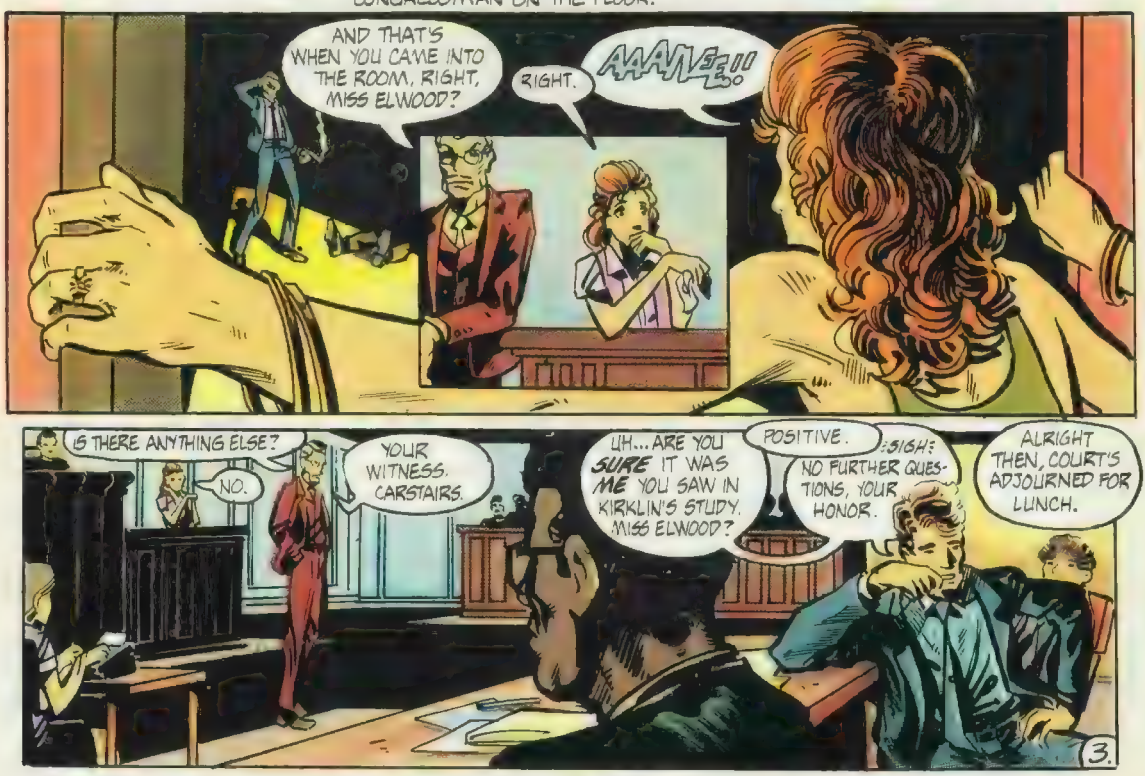
MM1008
FROM THE WRITINGS OF BARNEY McALLISTER:
The MASKED MAN
WRITTEN AND DRAWN BY B.C.BOYER
THE TRIAL
PLEASE, MISS ELWOOD. THERE'S NO NEED TO GO INTO DETAIL.
WE ARE WELL AWARE OF THE PHYSIQUE OF THE MASKED MAN.
OBJECTION! IF THE LADY WISHES TO DESCRIBE...
PLOP!
OBJECTION OVERRULED.
PLEASE CONTINUE. YOU SAY THE MASKED MAN CAME THROUGH THE WINDOW.
YES. AND THEN HE STARTED FIGHTING THE ROBBERS.
AFTER HE FINISHED THEM OFF, THE POLICE CAME.
THE MASKED MAN LEFT SHORTLY AFTER THAT.
FROM HERE MISS ELWOOD'S TESTIMONY BEGAN TO GET A BIT GARBLED. I ALREADY KNEW WHAT REALLY HAPPENED FROM WHAT DICK TOLD ME...
2.

LETTERED BY CARRIE McCARTHY • dedicated to Robert M. Ingersoll, attorney at law. • EDITED BY CAT & YRONWODE

...FOR INSTANCE, THERE WERE FOUR ROBBERS, NOT TWENTY. AND IT TOOK DICK FIFTEEN MINUTES TO SUBDUE THEM, NOT THREE.
HOWEVER, THERE WAS ONE THING MISS ELWOOD COULD NOT HAVE KNOWN.
WHEN THE POLICE CAME, THE MASKED MAN DIDN'T LEAVE. HE SIMPLY CHANGED INTO HIS SECRET IDENTITY: MR. DICK CARSTAIRS, DETECTIVE.

ARE YOU SURE, MR. CARSTAIRS?
POSITIVE, MR. KIRKLIN. THEY HAD TO HAVE BEEN FRANKIE'S MEN.
IS THERE SOMEWHERE WE CAN TALK?
YES. RIGHT HERE IN MY STUDY.
JUST THEN DICK WAS CLOBBERED FROM BEHIND.

WHEN HE AWOKE HE STUMBLED TO HIS FEET AND FOUND A SMOKING GUN IN HIS HAND AND A DEAD CONGRESSMAN ON THE FLOOR.


AND THAT'S WHEN YOU CAME INTO THE ROOM, RIGHT, MISS ELWOOD?
RIGHT.
AAAIIEE!!
IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE?
NO.
YOUR WITNESS, CARSTAIRS.
UH... ARE YOU SURE IT WAS ME YOU SAW IN KIRKLIN'S STUDY, MISS ELWOOD?
POSITIVE.
:SIGH: NO FURTHER QUESTIONS, YOUR HONOR.
ALRIGHT THEN, COURT'S ADJOURNED FOR LUNCH.
3.

THINGS LOOKED BAD. BUT WHAT MADE IT EVEN WORSE WAS THAT THE OPPOSING ATTORNEY WAS THE FAMOUS SIMON T. BAXTER.
HE USUALLY DOESN'T TAKE ON THE ROLE OF PROSECUTING ATTORNEY.
BUT THIS TIME HE VOLUNTEERED FOR THE JOB.
YOU SEE, CONGRESSMAN J.R. KIRKLIN WAS ONE OF BAXTER'S WELL-TO-DO CLIENTS. NOW THAT HE'S DEAD, BAXTER IS OUT OF A LOT OF MONEY.
AND THINGS LIKE THAT HAVE A WAY OF MAKING SIMON T. BAXTER MAD.
NOW YOU KNOW WHY IT LOOKS BAD.
THERE'S ONE MORE THING YOU CAN DO. BUT IT'S RISKY. IF IT BACKFIRES, THEY'LL SEND YOU UP THE RIVER FOR SURE.
SO WHAT DO WE DO NOW? WE'VE TRIED FINDING THE REAL MURDERER, BUT ALL THE CLUES POINT TO ME. THERE'S NO WAY I CAN CONVINCE THE JURY OTHERWISE.
WELL...FROM THE WAY THE JURY'S LOOKING AT ME, IT APPEARS I'VE ALREADY SET SAIL. DOING ANYTHING ELSE WON'T HURT.
CALL UP THE MAID, THE BUTLER... EVERYBODY...ACCUSE THEM ALL OF MURDERING KIRKLIN.
OH COME ON!
POINT OUT DIFFERENT MOTIVES. SHOW HOW EACH ONE OF THEM COULD HAVE DONE IT.
THEY'VE ALL GOT ALIBIS, REMEMBER?!
BADGER THEM. ACCUSE THEM. FLOOD THEM WITH ACCUSATIONS. PUT THEM ON THE DEFENSIVE. SOONER OR LATER ONE OF THEM MIGHT SLIP UP.
BUT EVEN IF THEY DON'T... EVEN IF THEIR ALIBIS HOLD UP... AT LEAST YOU'LL PUT SOME DOUBT INTO THE JURY'S MIND AS TO WHO REALLY DID IT.
I'LL NEED SOME DIRT ON THEM.
I'LL GET SOME.
WHOM DO I CALL TO THE WITNESS STAND IN THE MEANTIME?
4.

WHACK!
YOUR HONOR, I NOW WISH TO CALL TO THE WITNESS STAND MR. BARNEY McALLISTER.
@#*W@!!
COME ON, BARN. REMEMBER...THIS IS DREKSTON'S IDEA.
@#*W@!!
DON'T FORGET, NOW. WE'RE TRYING TO PUT SOME DOUBT INTO THE JURYS MIND. SO WHEN I ACCUSE YOU OF MURDERING KIRKLIN, ACT SURPRISED.
DON'T WORRY.
SO, MR. McALLISTER, HOW LONG HAVE YOU KNOWN CONGRESSMAN J.R. KIRKLIN?
'BOUT TEN YEARS.
PERSONALLY?
NAW. JUST FROM WHAT I'VE SEEN ON TV.
A MILD MANNERED STUDENT OF FOREST MOUNTAIN HIGH CASUALLY WALKS INTO THE COURTROOM! HIS EYES DART ABOUT!
"LITTLE DO THESE PEOPLE REALIZE," HE SAYS TO HIMSELF, "THIS IS ONLY MY SECRET IDENTITY!"
"IN ACTUALITY I AM THE AMAZING APHIDMAN!"
"AT LAST I'VE FOUND A WAY TO SUPPORT MY OLD DECREPIT AUNT GAY..."
"I SHALL BECOME..."
"A PHOTOJOURNALIST!"

YOU SAY YOU WATCHED THE CONGRESSMAN ON TELEVISION FOR TEN YEARS STRAIGHT?
YOU NEVER MISSED A SINGLE ONE OF HIS PROGRAMS?
YES.
APHIDMAN SIGHS, "I CAN'T TAKE GOOD PICTURES FROM HERE. HEY! I KNOW WHAT I'LL DO. I'LL ATTACH MY CAMERA TO THE CEILING WITH MY AMAZING APHID SPIT!"
DON'T YOU THINK YOU COULD HAVE FOLLOWED HIS CAMPAIGN JUST AS WELL IN THE NEWSPAPERS? WHY'D YOU WATCH HIM SO CLOSELY ON TELEVISION?
WELL I...
"IT'S A GOOD THING I BROUGHT MY APHID CLOAKING DEVICE. NO ONE WILL SEE ME UP HERE."
AAAIEEE!!
PLOP!
C'MON BARN. START HAMMING IT UP.
ALL RIGHT! I'LL TELL YOU! I...I WATCHED HIM CLOSELY ALL THESE YEARS BECAUSE H...HE'S GOT THE PRETTIEST BLUE EYES...
BLUE EYES?
AND THE MOST GORGEOUS BROWN HAIR...
HA!
AH- YOU'VE WATCHED HIM ALL THIS TIME BECAUSE YOU'RE A...A...

YES! YES! I'LL TELL YOU!
I'M A FAIRY!
YOU GOT THAT?
A FAIRY!!
SOB
YES, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN. BECAUSE HE COULDN'T HAVE THE CONGRESSMAN FOR HIMSELF, OUT OF JEALOUSY AND ANGER... HE KILLED HIM.
NO! NO! I DIDN'T DO IT! I'M INNOCENT!
THAT WILL BE ALL, MR. McALLISTER.
INNOCENT!!
IT WORKED, BARN.
THE JURY'S LOOKING AT YOU FUNNY.
I WOULDN'T DOUBT IT.
OH WELL... AT LEAST THERE'S NO REAL HARM DONE.
McALLISTER!!
OH NO! IT'S MY BOSS...
...J. JUDAH JOHNSON OF THE DAILY HORN.
GET OVER HERE ON THE DOUBLE!!
I CAN PICTURE IT NOW "McALLISTER," YOU KNOW I DON'T ALLOW THAT KIND OF THING IN MY OFFICE! YOU'RE FIRED!!!
SIR! IF YOU'D JUST LET ME EXPLAIN.
ALL RIGHT THEN... OVER DINNER.
HUH?
WE CAN GET TO KNOW EACH OTHER THEN.
BUT...
I MAKE THE MOST MARVELOUS QUICHE.
GOT SOME DIRT FOR YOU, DICK.
THE GARDENER WAS FIRED A MONTH AGO... HASN'T FOUND A JOB SINCE.
HE EVEN TRIED TO COMMIT SUICIDE.
MAYBE HE KILLED KIRKLIN OUT OF REVENGE.
THE MAID IS FIVE MONTHS PREGNANT. SHE DOESN'T HAVE A BOYFRIEND, FAMILY OR FRIENDS.
MAYBE IT'S KIRKLIN'S KID. SHE BLACKMAILED HIM FOR SUPPORT. HE REFUSED AND SHE KILLED HIM. WHAT HAVE YOU GOT ON SIMON BAXTER?
BAXTER? I STILL DON'T SEE WHY YOU...
WHY NOT? IF I CAN PUT SOME DOUBT INTO THE JURYS MIND ABOUT HIM... IMAGINE THE POSSIBILITIES...

I DON'T HAVE MUCH... JUST THAT KIRKLIN OWED BAXTER A LOT OF MONEY.
AND BAXTER KILLED HIM OUT OF REVENGE.
MAYBE.
THIS IS GREAT. FIRST I'LL GO WITH BAXTER, THEN THE MAID AND FINALLY THE GARDENER.
I NOW WISH TO CALL TO THE STAND SIMON T. BAXTER.
WHAT!!
HE'S A KEY WITNESS TO MY CASE.
OBJECTION!!
YOU WERE KIRKLIN'S LAWYER.
BUT SUCH THEATRICS DON'T DESERVE...
HE DOES HAVE A RIGHT, YOU KNOW.
STILL...
OBJECTION OVERRULED.
APHIDMAN HITS UPON A GREAT IDEA. HE ATTACHES HIS CAMERA TO HIS APHID FEELER AND EXTENDS IT OVER THE COURTROOM FOR A BETTER VIEW.
SO, BAXTER... HOW LONG DID YOU WORK FOR J.R. KIRKLIN?
BUT I MUST MOVE WITH CAUTION. FOR THE SLIGHTEST MOVEMENT CAN CAUSE THE GREATEST OF PAIN.
WHACK
ABOUT TWENTY YEARS.
AND IN THAT TIME HE MUST'VE OWED YOU QUITE A BIT OF MONEY, RIGHT?
WELL I...

IT MUST'VE BEEN A LOT. ACCORDING TO THIS COUNTY ASSESSMENT REPORT YOU EVEN TRIED TO PUT A LIEN ON HIS PROPERTY. IS THAT TRUE?
WELL I...
STRANGE.
WHY IS BAXTER GETTING SO NERVOUS?
IF NOT DINNER, THEN HOW ABOUT BRUNCH?
YES! YES! WE SEE IT ALL NOW, BAXTER! BECAUSE YOU NEVER GOT YOUR MONEY, OUT OF ANGER AND REVENGE... YOU...
YES... YOU KILLED J.R. KIRKLIN YOURSELF!
BUT...THEN AGAIN... IT COULD'VE BEEN SOME LOCAL HOODLUM.
BLAM BLAM BLAM BLAM
YES! YES! I KILLED HIM! BUT SO WHAT! HE OWED ME MONEY, YOU KNOW!! I'VE GOT MY RIGHTS TOO!! HA! HA! HA! HA!
BLAM BLAM BLAM
APHIDMAN HITS UPON ANOTHER IDEA. HE DECIDES TO CHECK OUT 'DIVORCE COURT' INSTEAD.

BLAM BLAM BLAM BLAM BLAM BLAM BLAM
OFF HAND, I'D SAY HE WAS A BIT PSYCHOTIC, WOULDN'T YOU?
A SNACK THEN! JUST A LITTLE SNACK!
THE JIG S UP, BAXTER.
DURING THE CONFUSION DICK CHANGED INTO THE MASKED MAN.
I'M TAKING YOU IN.
HA! HA! HA! NOBODY CAN STOP ME! NOBODY!
GUESS AGAIN, PAL.
NO! NO! IT'S ALL MY MOTHER'S FAULT!!!
SHE'S THE ONE WHO HUNG MY WET SHEETS OUT THE WINOW FOR ALL THE WORLD TO SEE!!! SHE'S THE ONE!!!
GET A HOLD OF YOURSELF, BUDDY. YOU'RE COMING WITH ME.
NOW I UNDERSTAND. BAXTER BECAME THE PROSECUTING ATTORNEY IN ORDER TO PUT HIMSELF ABOVE SUSPICION. HE'S VERY SMART.
WINDOW!! SHEETS!! MONEY!! HA! HA! HA!
THEN AGAIN.
THANKS FOR THAT GOOD IDEA, DAN. MIND IF I TAKE YOU OUT TO DINNER?
THAT WOULD BE GREAT, DICK.
SO IT'S OVER...IN MORE WAYS THAN ONE. DICK HAS BEEN ACQUITTED, DREKSTON HAS GAINED HIS RESPECT...AND NOW I'M LEFT HERE ALONE.
COFFEE?
-END-

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LETTERS TO SURF CITY

Send your letters to: ECLIPSE COMICS, P. O. Box 199, Guerneville, California 95446

Dear People,

Just got Eclipse Monthly no. 4. Really quite a change has come over this book since issue no. 3. Ditko and Robbins are both gone, and this issue Colan and McGregor both leave. But at least the best is still around.

B. C. Boyer's "The Masked Man" is one of the most enjoyable strips being published anywhere at the moment. And in the same magazine we get Marshall Rogers finally elaborating on the concepts created in his 1979 "Strange" portfolio.

Marshall is definitely at his peak here. He's doing a strip he created, and HE owns. The effort generated by this really shows, as does the obvious fun he's having doing it. This is the sort of product that creator's rights are bringing to us.

I'm glad to see "Cap'n Quick and a Foozle" graduating to its own book. (Maybe now we'll finally see "Klingbang the Koozle".)

The other high point of this issue for me was the back cover ad. Local lad makes good. New work by Peter Ledger, which by the look of it, he coloured himself. I'm eagerly awaiting this new series. If it's anywhere near as good as the Cap'n and the Masked Man, then you'll have another winner on your hands.

That's about it. So long!

Desmond W. Roden
P. O. Box 350
Hamilton, Queensland
Australia 4007

Thanks for your letter, Desmond, and with this issue, the "local lad" you mentioned, Peter Ledger, does "make good." In fact, he made good a long time ago . . . and he amazes me with every new page he creates.

While Peter's art and coloring (yes, of course, he colored the "Carlos" ad) and Christy's writing speak for themselves, you might be interested to know that their research on this strip has been incredibly extensive. Upon visiting their house at the beginning of this project, I was astounded by an entire bookcase *of books on the history of California! And when Peter showed me the leather work he produces and Christy handed me her photo of Peter in Carlos's costume which he made himself . . . I* knew *these people were s-e-r-i-o-u-s.*

At any rate, "Carlos McLlyr" is now slated for a three-issue run here in Eclipse Monthly. *But that doesn't mean more isn't planned for this Californio. Would you like to see more of Carlos? In* Eclipse Monthly*? In his own book? Please let us know what you think of this series. We'll be reading each and every letter carefully, and will pass your comments along to Christy and Peter. By the time all three parts have appeared, we'll make sure to run a representative sampling of your mail.*

Dear Jan and Dean and cat,

A few brief notes on Eclipse Monthly no. 4. I'm sorry to see the Foozle depart these pages – he was one of my favorite features. I'm not sure the character is strong enough to merit his own series, but I'll buy anything if it's drawn by Marshall Rogers – no matter how confusing (often the Foozle strip is difficult to understand).

I really feel the Foozle works best in an anthology format, where his humorous antics serve to counter-balance some of the more serious stories. Hopefully, you'll replace this strip with another humorous one. And tell Marshall to make his strips easier to understand.

Don't ever drop B. C. Boyer's "The Masked Man." This is one of the best series to come along in years. Like the Foozle, "The Masked Man" seems to work best in the short story format. B. C.'s stories and art get better with every issue. I'm looking forward to further adventures of this Spirit tribute. (The latest installment, with the homage to Lee/Ditko's Spider-Man, was a classic!)

As for stuff I *don't* like – I hated Trina Robbins's "Dope." I found it unreadable, though her art was fine as always. I also thought Ditko's "Static" was pathetic, like all work the artist has done ever since he forgot how to draw.

So, as you can surmise, I'm pleased to see "Dope" and "Static" disappear from these pages. Conversely, I'm sorry to see Doug Wildey's "Rio" go. I understand that next issue's installment of this great series will be the last for the time being. This is a mistake. I feel you should commission Wildey to do "Rio" for you on a monthly basis.

I liked Gene Colan's art on "Ragamuffins" and I thought part one of this story, with the two kids drowning the cat, was interesting if not sadistic. But part two left a lot to be desired. I'm sure there must be some symbolism between kids drowning cats and grown-ups facing prejudice, but I'm afraid it was lost on me. I think Don McGregor should stick to recounting tales of the thirties and forget about the modern-day updatings.

That's all for now. Over all, you've got a pretty entertaining package. I may only like half the stories, but the art is usually well done all around, so I feel Eclipse Monthly gives me my money's worth. I'd like to see more experimentation and different types of series in the future.

Barry Dutter
2283 Old Farm Road
Scotch Plains, NJ 07076

We appreciate your taking the time to write such a long letter, Barry, and you raise a number of interesting points.

First of all, while you enjoy "Cap'n Quick and a Foozle" in the short story format, have you considered that the reason you sometimes find it confusing is because the strip is cramped? Well, we have considered it and that primarily is the reason we're spinning it off. The frenetic pace set by Marshall in this series will, we all believe, work even better in longer stories, without as many "continued next month"s in the way.

B. C. thanks you for the kind words on his efforts.

I'm sorry you didn't enjoy either "Static" or "Dope," but don't blame Trina if you found the story "unreadable." She was very faithful in adapting Sax Rohmer's novel. Some folks love Rohmer's work, some hate it. Me, I like it. As for Steve Ditko having "forgotten" how to draw, Barry . . . I don't think any artist "forgets" how to draw, and if you examine your statement, I think you will, if pressed, admit instead that Ditko's current style just isn't to your liking. If you examine the career of many a good artist, you'll see definite "periods." Steve's

gone through many periods himself. Compare his highly detailed Charlton work of the late '50s with his more impressionistic "Spider-Man" art, and then again to the later "Blue Beetle" period. Like many creative people, Steve doesn't want to stagnate. He may not now be drawing in the style that pleases you, but that doesn't mean that he's "forgotten" how to draw. Like Howard Roark before him, Steve Ditko creates to please himself.

Don't worry about "Rio" being gone. Doug Wildey will reprise the series soon enough. He's working on a third 20-page saga even as we speak.

Finally, just for the record, "Ragamuffins" takes place in the 1950s, not the 1930s.

At any rate, Barry, thanks again for your thoughts.

Dear Editor.

For months, I heard rumors of a proposed costume change for comics' premier arachnid adventurer, but never dreamed that such a momumental event would ever transpire.

Needless to say, I was surprised when I picked up a copy of **Eclipse Monthly** no. 4 and discovered the Amazing Aphidman wearing that ridiculous looking red and blue concoction.

Whatever became of Aphey's beloved black and white attire? I really miss it, don't you, Dean?

Jeffrey Lowndes
809 Sunset St.
Scranton, PA 18509

Comrades,

"Cap'n Quick and a Foozle" was (were?) a delight for this boy, as usual. Can't wait for the book this team is going to be getting. I had momentary doubts about the the newey-wavey kiddos the Cap'n met up with since topical glimpses like their styles and those political figures in the bad guys seem like they'd tend to date an otherwise timeless strip awfully . . . er *quick*. What the hey, though. Those characters, as well as the rest, are all *amusing*. Like the nurse at the blood bank said when she accidentally put her needle in a sailor's wooden leg, "I can't get enough."

"Ragamuffins" suffered somewhat from being cut in half. Someone who missed issue three wouldn't be able to catch the parallels between the river and the pool. Are future episodes going to be slimmed down or similarly halved? There's got to be a happy medium somewhere, I suppose.

Every McGregor story reminds me of some obscure event in my own past, and this one was no exception. Back in '81, I briefly knew a rather pudgy girl who ruined at least two social gatherings I was at by her solemn devotion to John Lennon. She'd insist on playing "Double Fantasy" in the middle of everything, and would stare glassily at the record as it turned, her attention shifting only to glare at someone who refused to share in her mourning. Naturally, she'd shown no interest in Lennon at all until his death. McGregor touched subtly on the way in which people grabbed Lennon like that in those days. Some still do, I suppose, but *I* don't want to know them.

"The Masked Man" was once again great fun. The A.S-M. should only be drawn and written so well these days. I found the three pages of Pseudo Parker's "origin" hilarious. I was struck by the fact that Boyer was able to maintain his own style while catching traces of Ditko's at the same time. Or maybe *I'm* putting Ditko in there. Ah, that pansy sweater-and-tie combination on Percy! I *swear*, if Parker had only kept to clothing like that, he'd still be on top today!

Eric Yarber
520 N. Thomas, no. 3
Arlington, VA 22203

Thanks for your letter, Eric . . . and for the story about the nurse at the bloodbank. Have you heard the one about the hat model who went to buy a new lampshade?

Dear Eclipse People,

I would like to thank you for **Eclipse Monthly**. It is the best I have read in a long time.

"Cap'n Quick and a Foozle": this is the best in the book. I think their own book will be GREAT. Issue no. four had a great cover of the Cap'n and your friend and mine, a Foozle; the story was great, too. Marshall puts that extra "umph" into his artwork that makes it great.

"Ragamuffins": this one is different. That is almost all I can say except, "Keep it up, Don and Gene."

"The Masked Man": what can I say? B. C. Boyer does a great job. Number four was a bit corny, but all in all, it was very good.

Thank you for not putting in "Static." I have no liking for that strip. I am also glad "Dope" is done for. Anyhow, keep up the great work and keep **Eclipse** the best comic on the market.

Jack Hattendorf
2406 Lakeside Dr.
Arlington, TX 76013

If that's all you can say, Jack, then we're glad you're saying it! We're glad you're enjoying this book.

And that, my friends, brings us to the end of this lettercolumn. But before you read the "Next Issue" box, be sure to make a mental note to write us about this issue. We're here in Eclipse Central plugging away to try to please you. So let us know how we're doing.

– Dean

NEXT ISSUE

If you wonder what is happening to Dick and Barney's relationship, wait until you read next month's story called "Confessions." The spotlight is on Barney and you'll learn an awful lot about the man who narrates these stories every issue.

Serena Neiman takes that fateful step toward helping someone other than herself in the conclusion to "Nightingale."

And in "Carlos McLlyr," we find out what the mysterious sergeant in the last panel has in store for the son of Innes McLlyr, and more is revealed about the ancient Rune of Llyr.

All in beautifully painted colors. See you next month.

THE ECLIPSE CHECKLIST

DNAGENTS 10: "The Whole World Knows" contains part two of the Crossfire saga, in which the DNAgents track down his killer.

ZOT! 1: introducing Zot and his futuristic world in a nearby dimension. Trying to recover the stolen Key to the Door at the Edge of the Universe, Zot is chased by killer robots, meets Jenny Weaver from our Earth and finds that galactic peace is threatened. All in this FIRST ISSUE!

STAR*REACH CLASSICS 1: Starlin, Adams, Cirocco and Sim in one issue! Plus, a new Cirocco cover.

DESTROYER DUCK 6: Duke and his pals must go to a Pacific Island where they meet "Zombies in Paradise!" Plus, THE STARLING by Siegel and Mayerik!

SABRE 9: the dramatic denouement of the Joyful Slaughter story! See who's left alive in this one! Plus, Crimson Dawn!

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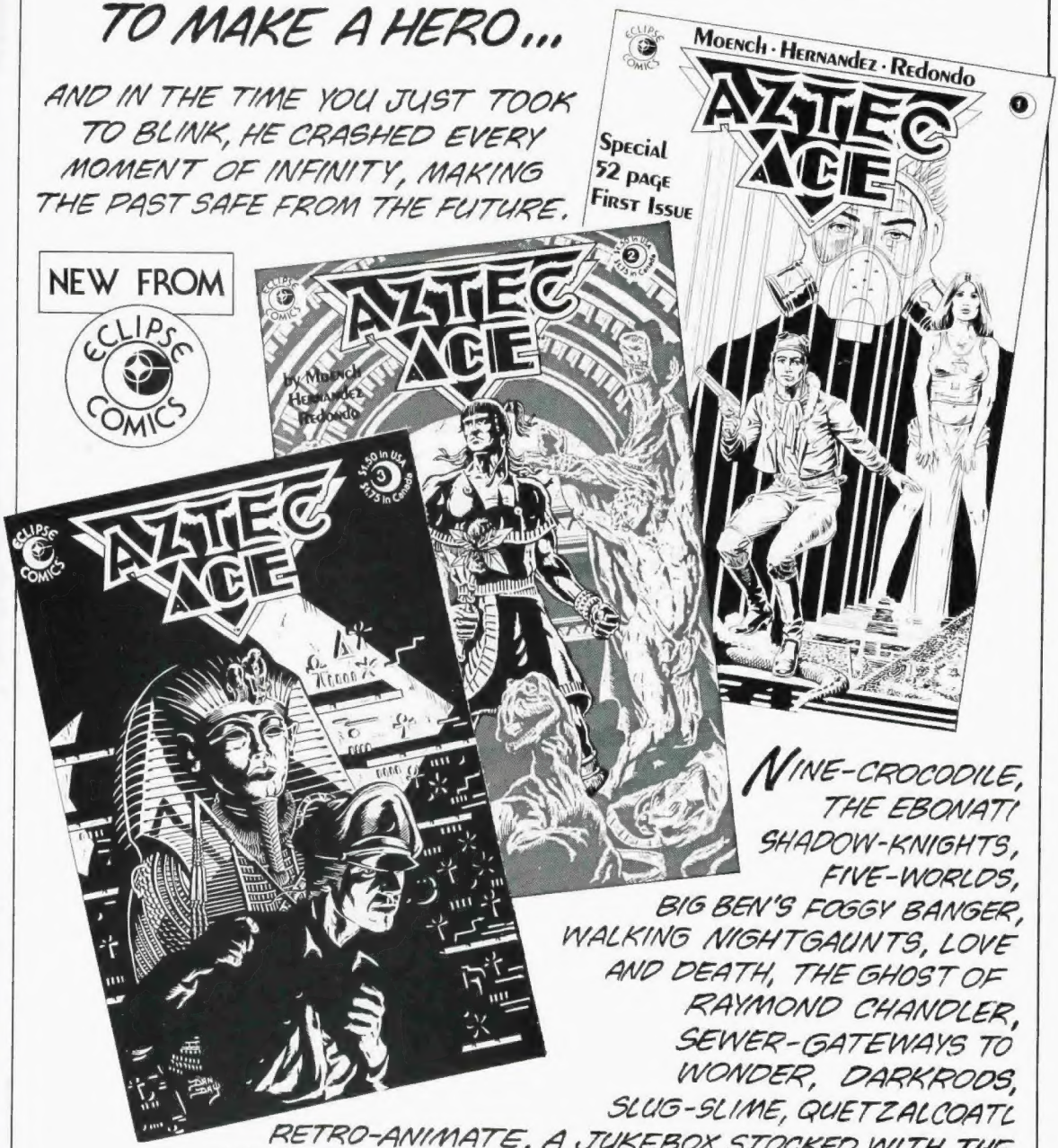

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